

1 Claims

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3 1. A software agent for representing a person's
4 identity, the software agent being adapted to dock a
5 dockable module, the dockable module comprising a method
6 means for performing a function, wherein the software
7 agent further comprises an intermodule communication
8 means for mapping a request from a requesting module to
9 the method means in the dockable module.

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11 2. A software agent as claimed in claim 1 wherein, the
12 method means is adapted to perform said function
13 responsive to said request.

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15 3. A software agent as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2
16 wherein, said request from the requesting module
17 comprises a label specifying a function and said method
18 means in said dockable module corresponds to the
19 specified function.

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21 4. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim
22 wherein said intermodule communication means comprises a
23 store of labels and associated modules.

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25 5. A software agent as claimed in claim 4 wherein said
26 store of labels and associated modules is a table.

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28 6. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim
29 wherein said method means is adapted to perform the
30 function of docking said dockable module with said agent.

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32 7. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim
33 wherein said method means is adapted to perform the

1 function of registering a label with said intermodule
2 communication means, the label specifying a function
3 supported by said dockable module.
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5 8. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim
6 wherein said method means is adapted to perform the
7 function of undocking said dockable module from an agent.
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9 9. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim
10 wherein said method means is adapted to perform the
11 function of requesting the discarding of a label from the
12 intermodule communication means, the label specifying a
13 function supported by said dockable module.
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15 10. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim
16 wherein, said method means is adapted to perform the
17 function of updating said dockable module within said
18 agent.
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20 11. A method of deployment of a module in an agent
21 comprising the steps of:
22 receiving a request for deployment of said module;
23 maintaining registration information relating to a
24 function supported by said module; and
25 invoking said function.
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27 12. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein,
28 the step of maintaining registration information
29 comprises maintaining a store of labels and associated
30 modules, each label specifying a function supported by a
31 module.
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1 13. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein said store
2 of labels and associated modules is a table.

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4 14. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 13
5 wherein, the step of maintaining registration information
6 comprises the step of registering a label specifying a
7 function supported by said module.

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9 15. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 13
10 wherein, said module is a docked module and said step of
11 maintaining registration information comprises the step
12 of unregistering a label specifying a function supported
13 by said docked module.

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15 16. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 13
16 wherein said module is a replacement module and said step
17 of maintaining registration information comprises the
18 steps of:
19 unregistering a label specifying a function supported by
20 a docked module from said agent; and
21 registering a label specifying a function supported by
22 said replacement module with said agent
23 and said method further comprises the steps of:
24 storing information related to the state of said docked
25 module; and
26 instantiating said replacement module using said stored
27 information.

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29 17. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 16
30 wherein, said step of maintaining registration
31 information further comprises the step of queuing calls
32 to the docked modules' registered labels, prior to the

1 step of registering a label specifying a function
2 supported by said replacement module.

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4 18. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 17
5 wherein, the function supported by said module is the
6 method of deployment of said module.

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8 19. A computer program comprising program instructions
9 for causing a computer to perform the method of claims 11
10 to 18.